Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association (EPA)

Code of Ethics for Pharmacy Professionals

3rd Edition

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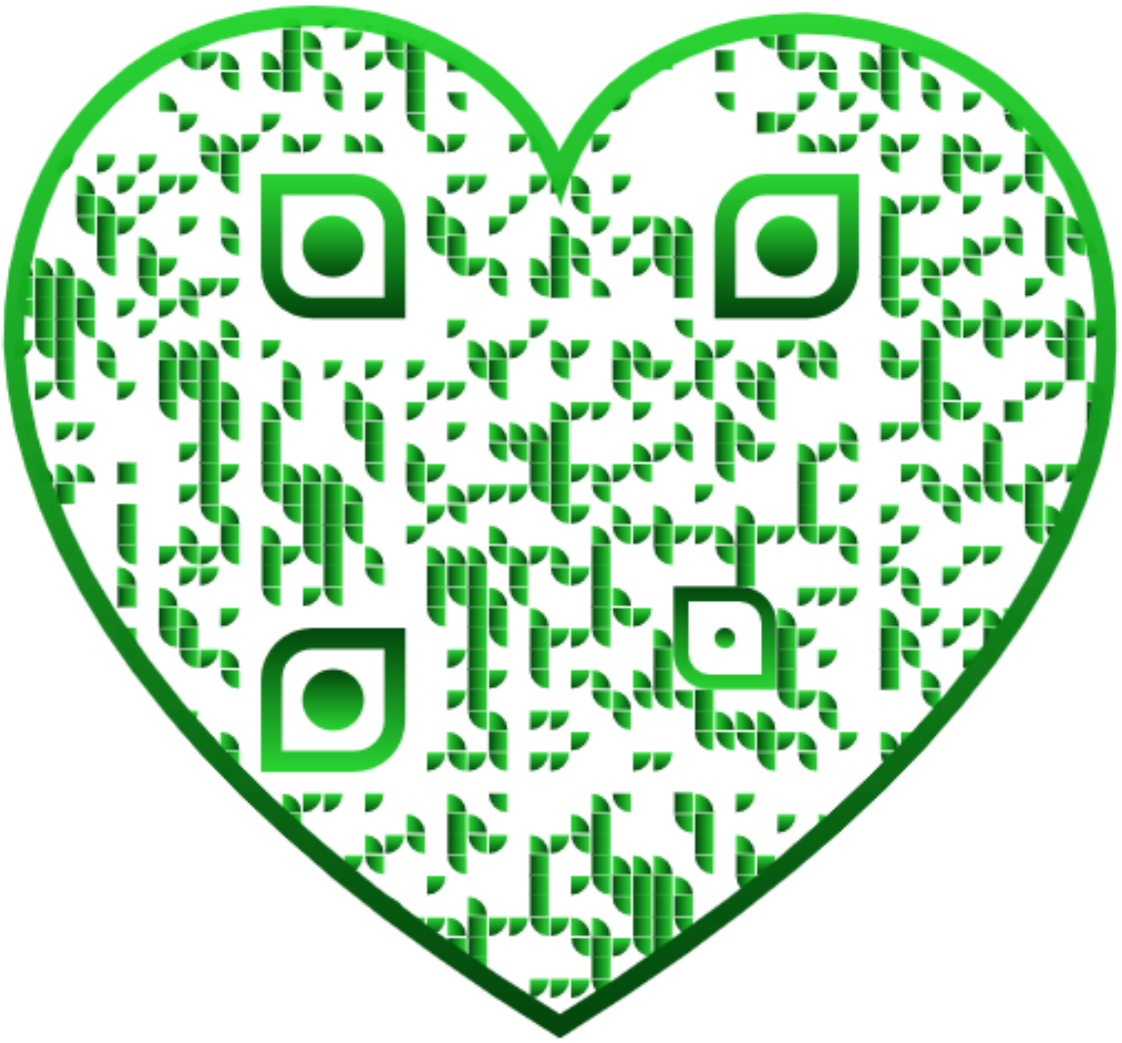
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Editions

First edition: 1996

Second edition: 2006

Third edition: 2023

Oath of a Pharmacist

At this time, I vow to devote my professional life to the service of mankind through the profession of pharmacy:

I will consider the welfare of humanity and relief of human suffering my primary concerns.

I will use my knowledge and skill to the best of my ability in serving the public and other health professionals.

I will do my best to keep abreast of developments and maintain professional competence in my profession of pharmacy.

I will obey the laws governing the practice of pharmacy and will support enforcement of such laws.

I will maintain the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct.

I will embrace and advocate changes that improve patient care.

I take these vows voluntarily with the full realization of the confidence and responsibility with which I am entrusted by the public.

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About the Ethiopia Pharmaceutical Association

Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association (EPA) is a national association of pharmacists in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Established in 1974. It works to uphold the honor and ethics of the profession, safeguarding members' professional rights and working with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the public gets quality pharmaceutical products and services in Ethiopia.

EPA's Vision and Mission

Vision: EPA aspires to advance the health and well-being of the society and to become one of the leading professional associations in Ethiopia, a model in Africa and globally respected.

Mission: EPA is committed to ensure the provision of pharmaceutical services of the highest quality through promotion of responsible and ethical practice and empowerment of its members to advance pharmacy practice.

EPA's Objectives

- Advocate and promote the provision of quality pharmaceutical service to the society.
- Build and maintain professional competency of its members and promote ethical practice.
- Protect members' professional autonomy, benefit, and rights.
- Advance the profession of Pharmacy in Ethiopia.

Foreword

The Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association (EPA) introduced the code of ethics for pharmacists practicing in Ethiopia since the last three decades. In light of the developments in the profession, the code of ethics was revised twice over the decades. The current revision focused on providing guidance on the ethical framework relevant to pharmacy professionals' practice for the delivery of effective services to the public. It also considered the state of the art with respect to pharmacists' relationships with patients or clients, other health professionals, and the public.

This Code of ethics aims to promote pharmacy professionals' commitment to ethical standards in their practices. It will also help in protecting the public by discouraging malpractice and pave the way for autonomy and self-regulation of the profession in the future. EPA calls all pharmacy professionals to take full responsibility of upholding ethics and professionalism in their practice and maintain trust and respect of the public.

In this edition, particular emphasis was given to the Principles of Code of ethics to express the responsibilities and professional values that are fundamental to the pharmacy profession, care of the patient, professional integrity and professional competence which creates a framework against which breaches of professional conduct can be avoided.

We promote the implementation of the Code of ethics by pharmacy professionals working in Ethiopia and breaches of the Code should be brought to the attention of the association. However, the Code is not intended to be exhaustive and does not provide guidance on every situation encountered in day-to-day activities. Pharmacy professionals must always act in accordance with the law as this code is not a substitute for the law.

Finally, EPA would like to extend its gratitude to all pharmacy professionals for their invaluable participation to make this third edition of the code of ethics a reality.

Pharmacist Tesfaye Seifu

President

Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association

Acknowledgements

The Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association would like to thank the members of the Technical Working Group for their commitment and contribution in developing this code of ethics for pharmacy professionals. The association would also like to acknowledge the Ethics and Award Committee for reviewing and scrutinizing the code of ethics.

Members of the Technical Working Group

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4. Alemayehu Sileshi …… Member
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Introduction

The practice of pharmacy parallels that of the history of civilization and played a crucial role in improving the well-being of humanity. Pharmacy professionals ensure the safety, efficacy, quality, accessibility of medicines and other health products to optimize health outcomes through their various roles in different settings such as clinical practice, health promotion and diseases prevention, supply, manufacturing, regulation, leadership and governance, education and research.

Despite the expanding role of pharmacy professionals, the practice of pharmacy especially in developing countries like Ethiopia is adversely affected by unavailability and unaffordability of medical products, complexity of the disease management and healthcare delivery systems. Shortage of pharmacy professionals, deviation from ethical practice, and inadequate continuing professional development programs also affect the pharmacy services.

In addressing such challenges, pharmacy professionals ethical practice at all times have a paramount importance. The third edition of the code of ethics for pharmacy professionals articulates the principles of ethical practices and promote the compliance of pharmacy professionals to the highest standards of conduct in their professional career.

The ethical principles of the code of ethics for pharmacy professionals are grouped into three themes: care, integrity and competence**.** These principles are equally important.

Summary of Principles of Code of Ethics for Pharmacy Professionals

Care	• Principle 1: Pharmacy professionals make patient's their first concern. • Principle 2: Pharmacy professionals use their professional judgments for the interests of the patients and the public. • Principle 3: Pharmacy professionals show respect for others.
Integrity	• Principle 4: Encourage patients and the public to participate in decisions about their care. • Principle 5: Pharmacy professionals maintain integrity, honesty and trust.
Competency	• Principle 6: Pharmacy professionals develop professional competence. • Principle 7: Pharmacy professionals are responsible for their working practices.

Scope

The code of ethics for pharmacy professionals defines the expected ethical behaviors of pharmacy professionals in Ethiopia. All pharmacy professionals registered in Ethiopia need to comply with the code of ethics. The code of ethics for pharmacy professionals does not substitute the laws.

Purpose

1. To state publicly the ethical principles that form the fundamental basis of the roles and responsibilities of pharmacy professionals.
2. To safeguard patients, care givers, and public from substandard and unethical professional practice by raising awareness, integrity, commitment and competence of professionals to the stated ethical principles and obligations of the code of ethics.
3. To foster the good relationship that should prevail among pharmacy professionals, other health professionals, patients and the public at large.

Definitions

Ethics

Ethics is the science of moral value. The basic foundation of ethical behavior is the basic concept: "Do Good and Avoid Evil". Ethics and law are related in that both share the social purpose of encouraging the right conduct. Whereas law attempts to achieve its purpose through the sovereign power of the government, ethics, especially professional ethics, attempts to achieve it without the intervention of the government. Therefore, law is enforced by the government, while ethics is a principle achieved by the voluntary self- discipline of professionals.

Professional Ethics

The moral principle, which should guide members of the profession in their dealings with colleagues, other professionals, patients, care givers, public and other concerned bodies.

Code of Ethics

The rules of conduct based on moral values which are stated by the Association.

Medical Products

Includes medicines, vaccines and medical devices

Pharmacy Professional

A pharmacist, druggist, or pharmacy technician licensed by the appropriate health professional regulatory organ in Ethiopia.

Patient

An individual receiving health care products and services from a pharmacy professional.

Professional Service

A service provided or activity undertaken within the pharmacy professional's scope of practice.

Code of Ethics for Pharmacy Profession

Principle 1: A Pharmacy Professional Makes the Patient their First Concern

Maintaining and improving the health, well-being, care and safety of patients are at the heart of all pharmacy practice. Patients must always be pharmacy professional's first concern and this principle applies to all pharmacy professionals. In any pharmacy practice setting, the pharmacy professional's decisions or behavior can affect patient care and safety.

Pharmacy professional must:

1.1. Ensure the health of the patient is their primary focus and act in the best interest of the patient.

1.2. Ensure that pharmaceutical business practices are conducted primarily in the interests of patient health.

1.3. Ensure the products and services provided are safe and of acceptable quality.

1.4. Promote good health and well-being, and acts to prevent harm to each patient and initiate steps to mitigate if the harm occurs.

1.5. Not abuse relationship with the patient or other clients for personal gain**.**

1.6. Protect the dignity of the patient and respect the patient's right to refuse treatment or service in accordance with the prevailing laws of the country**.**

1.7. Gather all the information required to assess patient needs and consider available evidences before providing appropriate treatment and care; and only supply a product when it is appropriate and after ensuring that the person understands how to use and handle it correctly.

1.8. Provide care in a compassionate, professional, timely, confidential, culturally acceptable and responsive manner.

1.9. Ensure the facilities, equipment and other resources are available and acceptable to patient care including those with disabilities.

1.10. In instances where he/she is unable to provide medicines or services to a patient, take reasonable action to ensure these medicines/ services are provided and the patient's care is not jeopardized.

1.11. Consult colleagues or other health professionals and refer patients to relevant service provider when necessary for the benefit of the patient.

Principle 2: Use Professional Judgments for the interests of Patients, Family and the Public

A pharmacy professional is expected to use his/her professional judgments to deliver safe and effective care. Professional judgments may include balancing the needs of patient, family and public and at the same time, managing legal and professional responsibilities in order to decide the best option for the patient. In delivering any professional service, managing actual or potential conflicts of interest in a transparent manner is of fundamental importance. A pharmacy professional also takes professional judgments in their leadership role to advocate for high standards of public health.

A pharmacy professional must:

2.1. Always act in a manner which promotes and safeguards the interest of the patient, family and public based on current and accepted evidence-based practices.

2.2. Show impartiality between patients and shouldn't discriminate by ethnicity, gender, disability, marital status, nationality, medical condition, creed, color, religion, social status, economic status, political stand and any other factors**.**

2.3. Ensure that professional judgments or independence are not influenced by personal, organizational or financial interests or incentives or similar measures.

2.4. Not engage in advertising, promotion or supply of goods or services that could include misleading or unsubstantiated claims, and/ or undermine the interest of the patient, family and public.

2.5. Ensure that when providing any medicines or services, that the health of the patient, client or public is the primary consideration, and that the benefit of use outweighs the risk.

2.6. Exercise professional autonomy, objectivity and independence, and manage actual, perceived or potential situations of conflict of interest.

2.7. Demonstrate accepted standards of professional and culturally appropriate personal behavior regardless of the setting, including in person and by electronic means.

2.8. Make responsible and effective use of resources in their practice.

2.9. Consult and take advice from colleagues and other healthcare professionals when necessary.

2.10. Reasonably challenge the judgment of colleagues and other healthcare professionals if needed in the interest of the patient, family and public.

2.11. Consider all available options and weigh the benefits and risks to the provision of best care of patients, family and the public in healthcare initiatives including emergency or outbreak situations.

Principle 3: Show Respect for Others

Showing respect for colleagues, patient, care giver, family, other professionals and the public is essential in forming and maintaining professional relationships.

A pharmacy professional must:

3.1. Be caring, respectful and compassionate to people.

3.2. Accept diversity and respect cultural differences and the right to hold personal values, opinions and beliefs when performing their professional services.

3.3. Respect and protect people's dignity, privacy, autonomy and confidentiality; and take all reasonable actions to prevent accidental disclosure or unauthorized access to confidential information and never disclose without consent unless required by law.

3.4.Respect the patient's choice, including the right to refuse treatment, care or advice, or to withdraw consent at any time.

3.5. Maintain proper professional boundaries in their relationships with patients and others during the course of their professional practice and take special care when dealing with vulnerable person.

3.6. Obtain consent for the professional services provided and the use of information obtained in the course of professional practice and use only for the purposes given, or where the law permits.

3.7. Respect and acknowledge the competencies of others and endeavor to work cooperatively with them to optimize the health outcomes of patients and the public.

3.8. Refrain-at all times- from expressing defamatory or unprofessional complimentary remarks in public (including electronic media) about any patients, colleagues or other health professionals.

3.9. Avoid any conduct that might bring the profession into disrepute or impair the public's confidence in the pharmacy profession, colleagues or other healthcare professionals.

Principle 4: Encourage Patients and the Public to Participate in Decisions about their Care

A pharmacy professional commits to enhance the rational use of medicines, and other healthcare products in partnership with patients and the public. Patients and the public have the right to be informed about the choices available in healthcare and be involved in making decisions based on these choices. This needs effective communication.

A pharmacy professional must:

4.1. Work together in partnership with patients, caregivers, the public and other healthcare professionals, and ensure that information is appropriately shared.

4.2. Communicate effectively with patients and the public and take reasonable measures to meet their health needs.

4.3. Encourage patients and the public to participate in shared decision-making by providing culturally appropriate, impartial, relevant, accurate and up-to-date information including the risks and benefits to improve compliance.

4.4. Take reasonable actions to address factors that may prevent or discourage patients from getting or taking their care and explain the available options.

4.5. Ensure that any service provided to a patient who cannot legally make decisions about his/her care is in line with the appropriate professional and legal requirements.

4.6. Avoid any arrangement that could affect or interfere with the public or patient's right to choose a treatment, care or pharmacy service.

Principle 5: Maintain Integrity, Honesty and Trust

A pharmacy professional must behave and act with honesty and integrity to maintain public trust, confidence and the reputation of the profession.

A pharmacy professional must:

5.1. Act with honesty, integrity and not compromise or abuse his/her position to secure and maintain public trust and confidence in the profession

5.2. Ensure the patient is treated with courtesy, dignity, integrity and honesty; and promptly respond to any complaints and criticism.

5.3. Provide accurate, truthful, relevant, and independent information in a form that is appropriate for and not misleading to patients.

5.4. Not abuse his/her professional position or exploit the vulnerability or lack of knowledge of others when providing or recommending services.

5.5. Act with honesty and integrity with colleagues and other health professionals.

5.6. Not discredit colleagues and other healthcare professionals during their professional service.

5.7. Must raise a concern appropriately when she/he becomes aware of a colleague or other healthcare professional whose professional performance, mental or physical health may result in compromised patient care, other safety issues, or raises concerns as to his/her probity

5.8. Declare and manage any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest in a clear, easy to understand, open and timely manner.

5.9. Not engage in inappropriate advertising or promotion that could undermine public trust in the profession.

5.10. Only purchase, supply and promote medicines or other healthcare products where there is credible evidence of safety, quality and efficacy.

5.11. Make sure that any documents and records completed or signed do not contain false or misleading information.

Principle 6: Develop Professional Competence

Accurate, current and relevant professional knowledge, skills and attitude are essential for safe and effective practice. Development of knowledge, skills and professional attitude must continue throughout a pharmacy professional's working life, which involves keeping knowledge and skills up-to-date.

A pharmacy professional must:

6.1. Comply with continuing professional development (CPD) requirements.

6.2. Apply knowledge and skills appropriately to your practice.

6.3. Identify, recognize and take action to address the knowledge and skill gaps; and practice only in the areas where he/she is competent.

6.4. Keep knowledge and skills up-to-date and relevant to ensure a high standard of professional competence and thereby improve the quality of practice.

6.5. Commit, promote and encourage a culture of lifelong learning and self-development consistent with role, responsibility and scope of practice.

6.6. Ensure professionals who work under his/her supervision have sufficient competence and communication skills.

6.7. Respond constructively to the outcomes of competence assessments, practice visits, other appraisals and reviews of professional performance.

6.8. Manage personal health, well-being and professional appearance to ensure there is no negative impact on professional practice.

Principle 7: Be Responsible for Your Working Practices

A pharmacy professional is responsible for the professional decisions and services; and shall maintain the highest professional standard. Pharmacy professional must practice only when fit and competent to discharge professional services to patients or clients and members of other professions.

A pharmacy professional must:

7.1. Take responsibility for all professional activities and be accountable to any damage that may be inflicted on the patient or client as a result of negligence, non-conformance of professional duties and breach of professional conduct.

7.2. Adhere to all legal obligations related to pharmacy profession.

7.3. Take responsibility to expose any act of misconduct or malpractice committed by colleagues or other health professionals and cooperate with law enforcement and other concerned bodies.

7.4. Actively participate in and contribute to the development, education and training of colleagues and students, and share their skills, knowledge and expertise.

7.5. Communicate with team members regarding each person's responsibility and line of reporting; and only delegate tasks to individuals with appropriate competency.

7.6. Ensure supply and use of safe, effective and quality assured medicines and other health products.

7.7. Make sure that there is an effective complaints procedure and issues are being addressed properly.

7.8. Demonstrate leadership, teamwork and compassion in workplace to optimize patient's health outcomes.

7.9. Should proactively identify potential areas of risk in your practice and take steps to mitigate these risks

References:

1. Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association (2006). Code of Ethics for Pharmacists Practicing in Ethiopia. 2nd Edition.
2. International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) (2014). Code of Ethics for Pharmacists